Our House Hunting.

"It's too bad!" I say, half crying. "I really can't stand it much longer. We shall have to make another change."

"Making six in five months," says Jack. "I wouldn't mind it if we seemed to better ourselves; but I can't see that we do. If our rooms are not dirty, the parlor is. If the other boarders are not noisy, there is sure to be a piano next door, or a vocalist or French horn across the street, or a church bell around the corner, or something equally objectionable. Here where it is clean and quiet, we are half starved. What do you say to a flat, Ethel?"

"Oh not a flat!" I cry in horror. "I saw enough of that at Aunt Mary's. She had a piano below her which went—well, all day and half the night; and the gentleman above her had the habit of coming home in the small hours and dancing a double shuffle in his boots. Then the trouble with servants and the way the elevator gets stuck and the danger of fire. Oh, Jack, not a flat, whatever we do! I never, never could come down one of those dreadful fire escapes on a dark night."

"Well, then what would you think of a house in the country?" says Jack.

"A house in the country!" I cry. "But do you really mean it? Could we afford it, Jack?"

"I really think we might," says Jack, pondering. "My salary is to be raised next month, and take it for all in all, I don't believe that a small house in a country town would cost much more than our board and washing in the city. Only we can't go for luxuries, you know, little woman. A small house and one servant. Do you think you could get along?"

"Get along! Oh, Jack!" I cried. "It would be heaven. To go out of this hot, dirty city that I always did hate, and to have a little house all to ourselves, where I can potter about as much as I like, and perhaps a flower garden, just a little bit of a one, Jack. Oh!" I gasp for breath, unable to express the rapture which fills my soul at the idea.

Jack looks at me, half laughing, half sad, and wholly surprised. "Why, Ethel, I had no idea you felt like that about it," he says kindly. "Why did you never tell me that you hate the city so much?"

"Why should I?" I say. "I thought you had to be here, and—and—I don't hate the city as much as I love you, Jack. But you and the country together!" And again I pause and clasp my hands in speechless ecstacy.

So it falls out that on one bright day, Jack, having obtained leave of absence from the office, we start together on a house-hunting expedition. It has taken us long to decide where to fix our abode, but we have at length settled upon the town of Medfield as the very place for us. It is healthy, it is pretty, the society is good, and it is near enough to the city to enable Jack to go in and out every day. All things considered, and, of course, provided we can find a suitable house, Medfield seems to be the very place for us. Jack has provided himself with lists of houses from several agents, and we charter a hack at the station and start upon our exploration.

Really, these house agents appear to have had most singular ideas. Jack has carefully told them what we want; a small house with modern improvements, rent not to exceed a certain very modest sum. The first house before which our hack pauses is a very elaborate affair, standing in rather extensive grounds. It has conservatories, bay windows, verandas and all manner of fanciful decorations.

"Jack," I whispered, "however low the rent may be, this will never do for us. We should be as hopelessly lost in it as two mice in a dog kennel."

Jack laughs. "You need not trouble yourself, my dear," he says. "We will take the next house on our list. The agent has evidently made a mistake."

The next is a small, plain four-square house, which looks more promising until we discover that it has no modern improvements.

"Any range?" I ask, timidly.

"I said no improvements," answered the tenant, stiffly.

"Why Jack," I gasp, "Is a range a modern improvement?" I never knew that before." At which both Jack and the tenant laugh, and we promptly leave.

The next house has no closets; the one after that has a cellar kitchen far below the level of the street, damp and musty for want of light and air.

"I could never eat anything that came out of that kitchen," I cry aghast.

The morning is wearing on, and no house to suit us has been found yet.

"I'll tell you what, little woman," says Jack, "we shall never get on at this rate. Suppose we seperate. There are two lists left; I will take one, and you the other. Then we will meet at the hotel at one o'clock and compare notes over our lunch. How will that do?"

It will do very well, I think; so a second hack is called, and Jack and I start on our seperate ways.

There is no use dwelling upon all my disappointments; but at last, at last I found the very house which I have seen in my dreams. Small, snug, convenient; it is, I am convinced, the very place for us. Time is just up as I leave its door, and I drive to the meeting place with a heart swelling with satisfaction, and a very decided hope in my mind that Jack has not been equally fortunate; not that I begrudge him any success, but this house suits so perfectly that I am quite sure no other can do as well, and the comparison and discussion between the two would be only so much time lost. My heart sinks at the sight of Jack's beaming face as he comes forward to help me out, and I am quite prepared for his first words.

"I have found the very place to suit us, Ethel."

"So have I," I say faintly; but Jack does not stop to hear me.

"Just such a house as we decided upon; small and compact, yet with plenty of room for us in it."

"It can't suit us as well as mine," I cry. "Mine has three good bedrooms on the second floor."

"So has mine," says Jack, "and another little room besides, which would make a capital den for me."

"Mine has a large, light closet, which will be just the thing for a storeroom," I say.

"Mine is only five minutes walk from the station," says Jack; "just a convenient distance for me."

"Mine is some distance from the station, I am afraid," I say; "but the lady who lives there now says that her son goes in and out every day. And oh! Jack, it is quite in the country. The street is heavily shaded with trees, and there are no houses opposite—only fields sloping up a little hill with a grove on it. Think what a change from brick houses!"

"My house has open fireplaces with grates all through it," says Jack. "I looked out for that the first thing. No proper ventilation without open chimneys you know."

"Oh, Jack!" I cry. "And I told you that we must have a furnace. How can one servant spend all her time making up open fires every day! Now mine has a furnace—a most excellent furnace. The lady who lives there now says she has never needed an extra fire in the house. I suppose your house has a range?"

"I suppose so. I'm sure I never thought of asking. But I know it has a large piazza, which will be delightful in Summer."

"A piazza won't cook our dinner nor send hot water up to the bathroom," I say, half laughing, and more than half inclined to cry.

"I suppose there is a bathroom?"

"Oh, yes," says Jack, brightening up—"an excellent bathroon; so of course there must be a range."

"It doesn't follow," I said gloomingly. "Some of the bathrooms I have seen had only cold water."

"But there are two faucets," says Jack, triumphantly. "I particularly noticed the faucets."

"Did you turn them or ask about them?"

"No; but—"

"Then how do you know that one was for hot water?" I asked, sardonically. It may have been put there in case a range is ever put in. Now my bathroom has hot and cold water, and a beautiful large closet for linen besides. How are the closets in your house, Jack?"

"I don't know," says Jack, frowning, thoughtfully. Somehow I can't seem to remember any. It has beautiful mantel-pieces, though."

"We can't keep our clothes in mantelpieces, nor on them, either," I said. "I'm not going to live in a house without closets in every room."

"Most likely mine has plenty of closets," says Jack; "only I can't remember. Besides, I never did see much good in closets, anyway. Things are always getting tucked away in them and lost. Then you have to buy more, so that it is a great saving not to have them. I'll tell you what my house has, though—a first rate vegetable garden."

"Who cares for a vegetable garden?" I cry, becoming a little exasperated. "We can buy all the vegetables we want, and, besides, who is going to take care of it, if you are going to be in town all day? I don't suppose you meditate sitting up at nights to dig and weed. We should have to hire a man, and his wages would come to more than the price of the vegetables. Now my house has beautiful flower beds in front, and flowers that stay, roses and larkspur and day lilies and such."

"Mine has grape vines and currant bushes and two pear trees," says Jack, triumphantly. "You know you like pears, little woman."

"Some kinds," I say, dubiously. "I know yours are the tough, bitter kind, full of little hard knots. The trees are only in blossom yet, so you couldn't tell."

"Neither could you for that matter," says Jack. "I might as well say that all your roses are worms, and I dare say they are."

"Nonsense!" I say, peevishly. "You're just determined not to like my house. What color is yours?"

"Color?" says Jack, looking puzzled. "Well, really—oh, brown, I think; yes, brown, with red blinds."

"Red blinds!" I cry, in horror. "Oh Jack! I never could stand red blinds, never in the world. They're hot, and they're dreadful for the eyes, and they're just horrid. How could you pick out a house with red blinds, unless it was just to spite me?"

"Well, well," said Jack; "a pot of paint would soon remedy that. Besides, my blinds are not the sort of red you're thinking of. They're so dark that—maybe you would not call them red, after all. What color is your house?"

"Gray," I say—"a very dark gray, with brown blinds just pinked out with red. Not enough to hurt, you know, only just a line or two. And, oh, Jack! the parlor is so pleasant! It has a bay window and two others, and I can make it just lovely."

"My house has a beautiful dining room," says Jack, "large and light and looking to the south. A dining-room ought to be the most cheerful room in the house."

"And where is the kitchen?" I ask.

Jack looks blank. "Really, I don't know. Downstairs, I think. But it is a good kitchen. I asked particularly."

"Is there a dumb waiter?" I ask, and again Jack looks puzzled.

"I don't know," he says, slowly. "Do houses generally have dumb waiters in the country?"

"Jack!" I exclaim, indignantly. "Of course they do, when there is a downstairs kitchen. How could one servant spend her time in carrying the meals up and down! Now my kitchen is on the same floor with the dining-room, but separated from it by a short passage, so that the smell of cooking cannot reach it."

"The smell of cooking can't well come into the dining room from a downstairs kitchen," says Jack.

"Yes, it can," I say; "up the dumb waiter. It will always be just full of it."

"But you don't know that there is a dumb waiter," says Jack, laughing.

"Then that's worse," I cry. "But I see just what it is. You've made up your mind that we are to go and live in your house, whether it suits or not, and you don't care a bit that mine is ever so much better in every way, and—"

"Why Ethel, Ethel, what ails you?" cries Jack, looking at me in simple amazement. "I am quite sure I never said anything of the kind, and I never saw you like this before." That is quite true, as I very well know. I struggle a moment against the conviction; then a sudden flood of remorse rushes over me. I can't well burst into tears in a hotel dining-room, and I fight valiantly against the choky feeling in my throat and try to wink away the salt drops that rise to my eyes.

"Poor little woman!" says Jack, seeing my efforts. "You are just worn out. Never mind, dear, I know what it all means. You are tired and overheated and nervous, and I ought not to have let you do so much. I have no doubt at all that your house is better than mine. Women are always better judges of such things than men. The best thing we can do is to go straight to the agent and take your house, and then go home quietly."

But Jack's amiability is the finishing stroke.

"Oh, Jack!" I cry, "I am a wretch. I am thoroughly ashamed of myself. I don't believe my house will do at all, and I know that yours is just what we want. No. What we will do is to go straight to your agent and take your house, I know mine can't hold a candle to it."

Jack laughs. "We seem to have changed sides rather suddenly," he says, "and not to be much nearer to a settlement. I'll tell you what we'll do. We have nearly an hour yet before the next train goes. I will tell your hackman to drive us to your house, and after we have seen that we will go on to mine. Then we can make up our minds, and write to the agent of the one we decide upon."

"I know it will be yours," I say; but Jack shakes his head.

"More likely yours," he says. "Women always know more about such things than men. At all events, it is well to have a choice."

The hackman takes us back by the way which I travelled before, and which I remembered well. I am careful to point out all its beauties to Jack, the heavy trees which nearly meet overhead, the saucy little brook which rambles across the road under the mossy stone bridge; the pretty cottages standing each in its own space of greenery on one side of the street; the open fields on the other which give the impression of air and space, for which I pine.

The house is reached at last, and Jack looks up at it without a word.

"Isn't it a pretty shade of gray, Jack?" I ask, wistfully. "And those dark shutters, with their red markings, make such a nice finish to it. But I know yours is much prettier," I add, with a magnanimity of which the effect is, I fear, a little injured by a faint sigh.

"Gray, is it?" said Jack. "I never was good on colors, you know, but—well, yes, it's very pretty. I like the shutters, too. Brown, you say they are! I never had any eye for colors, you know."

We enter the front door, and the lady, Mrs. Pierson I find her name to be, greets us smilingly.

"You have came to look at it together," she says. "That is much wiser. One can always see what the other overlooks."

"Yes," I say. "I liked it so much that I wanted my husband to see it, too." But what further I would say is checked by the fact that Jack has turned into the open door of the parlor and calls to me.

"Is it not a pretty room, Jack?" I ask. A bay window and two others, just as I told you! And the register is on the floor at this corner."

"And a grate in case the furnace should not be enough," says Jack, looking about him.

"They have never been obliged to use it," I say, eagerly.

"But it ventilates the room, all the same," says Jack. "The dining-room is back I suppose. Yes, a fine, light room, just such as I like."

"The kitchen is back of it," I say, "separated by a short passage."

"That settles the question of the dumb waiter, about which you were anxious, I suppose," says Jack.

"That was in your house," I say. "The kitchen was downstairs in that, you know."

"Oh—ah, yes, I said so, I believe," says Jack. "I may have been mistaken, though. Well, little woman, as we both like the house, I think the best thing we can do is to take it."

"Oh, but we haven't seen your house yet, Jack," I cry, "and I'm sure it is ever so much nicer. The vegetable garden, you know, and the pear trees and all."

"Your wife did not see the vegetable garden when she was here before," says Mrs Pierson. "She was satisfied with the flower beds."

"Oh, is there a vegetable garden, too?" I cry. "Then—But never mind; we are not likely to take the house, so—"

But Jack, whose eyes have been twinkling in a peculiar way for some time, now surprises me by going off into a roar. Mrs. Pierson laughs, too, as if she has caught the joke; but I am simply dazed, and can only look from one to the other inquiringly.

"I can't—I can't keep it up any longer," says Jack, at last. "Ethel, my dear, it was not a deliberate sell. How it happened I can't tell yet; but this is my house, brown paint, open gates and all. My dear child, it is too delightful! Our first quarrel tipped in the end, our minds moving instinctively in the same channel, and all that. Let me see your list.

I handed him the list, and running his eye down it he says; "Ah, yes, I see. 'The Ogilby house,' the same name which is on my list. They have given the house to two agents. Under the circumstances they ought to toss up for the commission. Well, Ethel, I suppose the best thing we can do is to take both houses, and be sure of being suited. Really it is the best joke I ever heard of."

Then he goes off into another fit of uproarious laughter, into which, after a moment's hesitation, I join.

"When did you find it out first?" I ask at last.

"Not certainly until I saw Mrs. Pierson's face," says Jack, regaining his gravity with an effort. "We approached it by a different way, which threw me off the track. I thought the house looked familiar as we drove up to it, but I have seen so many to-day that I could not be quite sure."

"I thought your house was so near the station," I hazard. And Jack replies:

"So it is. Your driver took you by a round-about way, and besides, there is a short cut for foot passengers. The best of all this is, you know, that it inspires us with such absolute confidence in each other's judgment hereafter, I shall confide my affairs to your hands with infinite certainty, Ethel, and you, of course, will do the same by me."

"Except in the matter of matching colors," I say laughing. "I should hardly like you to select the trimming of a brown dress for me, for instance."

"Well," sylid Jack, "if you trust me in all the rest, I think I can safely leave you to select your own gowns."—*Toledo Blade.*

The Land or Rest.

Beyond the valley lying low,
Through which our feet some day shall go,
Beyond the high hill's purple haze,
That stretches far beyond our gaze,
There is a place most sweet and blest,
Which here we call the Land of Rest.

A land with hills and valleys fair,
And many of our loved are there
So silently, and one by one
They went the lonesome journey on;
All, with white hands upon their breast,
Went out into the Land of Rest.

I long that happy bourne to see,
I long to know how it will be
When first these eyes of mine behold
The land of which the prophets told;
Of my inheritance posessed,
When shall I reach the Land of Rest!

O blessed Land! O time go slow!
Not with reluctance I shall go,
But on my lips a happy song
That it, the day looked for so long,
Has come to take me to that blest,
That peaceful land, the Land of Rest.
—*Helen A. Manwlle in Good Housekeeping.*

Clipped His Feathers.

A big bootblack was being looked up to by the gang around the postoffice because he had the cholera morbus nine times this season, when a small boy elbowed his way into the crowd and said:

"Oh! you go out! I was stung by seven bumblebees, fell off the house, run four slivers into my feet, and was locked up twice by the police. Cholera morbus! Why, the doctor has prescribed for our baby to have it every day to take the bend out of his bow-legs."—*Detroit Free Press.*

BARTEMEUS.

"And Jesus answered and said unto him: What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight."

I would receive my sight; my clouded eyes
Miss the glad radiance of the morning sun.
The changing tints that glorify the skies
With roseate splendors when the day is done;
The shadows soft and gray, the pearly light
Of summer twilight deepening into night.

I cannot see to keep the narrow way,
And so I blindly wander here and there,
Groping amidst the tombs of hopeless stray
Through pathless, tangled deserts, bleak and bare;
Weeping I seek the way I cannot find—
Open my eyes, dear Lord, for I am blind.

And oft I laugh, with some light, thoughtless jest,
Nor see how anguish lines some face most dear,
And write my mirth a mocking palimpsest—
On blotted scrolls of human pain and fear;
And never see the heartache interlined—
Pity, oh, Son of David! I am blind.

I do not see the pain my light words give.
The wincing, shrinking heart I cannot see;
So light of thought, 'midst hidden grief I live,
And mock the cypress tombs with sightless glee
Open my eyes, light, blessed ways to find—
Jesus, have mercy on me—I am blind.

My useless eyes are reservoirs of tears,
Doomed for their blind mistakes to overflow;
To weep for thoughtless ways of wandering years.
Because I could not see—I did not know
These sightless eyes—than angel's glance less kind—
Light of the World, have pity! I am blind.
—*Robert J. Burdette.*

A DAY AT OXFORD.

The Famous English University and Its Stucent Life.

Americans Who Are Sitting at the Feet of the Classic Gamaliels—Education for Journalism—What it Costs to Pass Through Oxford—Where and How the Students Live—A Lovely Landscape.

A correspondent of the New York World, writing from London, says: Last Thanksgiving Day I had an opportunity of getting a hurried view of Oxford student life. The American students at Oxford gave a Thanksgiving dinner. It is the intention of the American students to keep up this custom if their number will permit. I found to my surprise that the number of American students at Oxford is only twelve, and that of this number the majority are taking special courses and have no fixed period for their stay there. It is not generally known that among the dons or fellows there are at present two Americans. It is only within late years that any foreigner could become a fellow of the Oxford University. These Americans are Walter Ashburner, Fellow of Merton, and the Rev. W. A. B. Coolidge, Fellow of Magdalen. These two men have won their positions at Oxford through their scholarship. Mr. Coolidge is a noted Alpine explorer. He is the editor of a paper devoted to the pastime of scaling the peaks of the Alps. He has excelled even the most extreme Englishman in his passion for this form of recreation and investigation. He is a short, square shouldered man, with a sturdy frame and a resolute, iron featured face. He wears steel bowed glasses. The lower part of his face is covered by a dark mustache and beard. Mr. Ashburner is tall, slim, with regular features, dark eyes and a slight mustache. He made one of the best speeches of the college men at the dinner. He does not look a day over twenty-five years of age. He has the stooping shoulders and classic pallor of a student too fond of his books and too little of outdoor exercise.

THE UNIVERSITY CHAPEL.

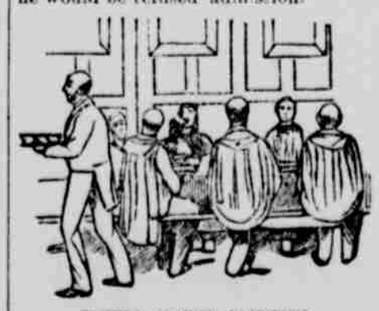
The following is a list of the students from the United States who are now at Oxford: E. P. Warren, Boston; James T. Van Rensselaer, New York, New College; W. R. P. Willing and Barclay Warburton, Philadelphia; E. A. Haserick, Boston, Christ Church college; S. E. Porter Burrel, Magdalen college. Non-collegiates—Rev. H. S. Bliss and Rev. E. D. Tibbitts, New York, and Harry Gardield, Cleveland. Of the twelve students two will engage in journalism after they have finished their studies. Van Rensselaer has had previous experience as a reporter in New York, and is now completing his third year's course as an undergraduate. Warburton is the son of the proprietor of the Philadelphia Telegraph. He is taking a special course of lectures relating to English literature. He will follow journalism. He is one of the most active of the Americans in the colony and is devoted to outdoor sports. Bliss is studying a course of Arabic, intending to enter the missionary field when he has finished his studies here. He is a strong tall alert, handsome young man, with the hooked nose and the sharp, twisted mustache of a cavalry officer. He has anything but the appearance of a clergyman. He has a most acute, energetic mind, and would undoubtedly make his way in any professional career he might select; but he has made up his mind to bury himself in missionary work in Asia, and I know from the formation of his jaw that he will not easily give up a determination once positively formed.

The small number of American students at Oxford is easily accounted for. Until a very recent time the regulations at Oxford were so strict that American students preferred the greater freedom of the German universities. The young men who come to Europe from America to study are nearly always graduates of good schools. They feel that they have been in leading strings long enough and so they have not taken kindly to the extraordinary discipline which was and is still enforced at Oxford. The relaxation of some of these regulations however, has brought to Oxford a few American students, and they hope to have others come in time, so as to have as large a representation at Oxford as as any one of the German university places. It is only within a few years that any one not a believer in the tenets of the church of England could obtain a degree. This has been changed, I believe, only since 1870.

Life at Oxford is no more expensive for a student than at any one of the great colleges of the United States. I asked Mr. Warburton about the cost of student life here, and he was able, reporter like, to give me the exact figures. He said that a student could live well and have everything that he should have with an income of $1,500 a year. There are plenty of students who are getting along on half that. Two thousand dollars a year would be a most liberal estimate. The students that were classed as rich were the sons of wealthy families who allowed them £1,000 a year pocket money. Of course there is a fast set at Oxford, as there is in every university town. The members of this set spend money recklessly and often get into debt, but their expenses have nothing to do with any proper estimate of the cost of student life here. The standard of examination for admission to Oxford is no higher than at any of our best colleges. The requirements after that are very much less. An undergraduate of ordinary abilities can finish the course in any one of the colleges here within three years, and in the three years he will study six months only in each year. The scholastic year consists of three terms of only eight weeks each. They have six weeks' holiday at Christmas. It is easy to see from the short period of study and the predominance given to classical studies that not much of a general education can be obtained at Oxford. Strangers who come to Oxford often ask where the university is, not seeming to understand that there are thirty colleges comprised in the university system at Oxford. While they are generally classed together and pursue the same lines of study, yet they are separate and distinct organizations. Some of the colleges are very rich and some are very poor.

Adult students from the United States object very seriously to the close hours that students are required to keep in the first place they are required to be in their quarters at 9 o'clock in the evening. If they come in after they are fined twopence; if they come in after 10 they are fined a shilling; if they come in after 11 they are fined half a crown; if after 12 they are obliged to pay a pound, and three appearances after midnight subject a student to expulsion. The students are required to live during the first year or two at Oxford in the college building. It is only in the second year or in the latter part of their course that they can obtain permission to live in lodgings. People who lodge students can only take them after permission is given by the faculty of the college where the student is enrolled, and only after the lodging house keeper has agreed to make reports daily upon the character and conduct of the student lodger. As a matter of fact, the lodging house keepers rarely, if ever, make reports against the students. This is pretty generally understood by the college authorities, and they never permit students to lodge outside when their conduct has been at all questionable during their preliminary course of study.

Students' quarters in the various colleges consist of a sitting room and a bedroom. This sitting-room is also used as a dining-room. The rooms are cared for by a male servant, called a scout. He also serves the meals. The students breakfast and lunch in their rooms; they dine in the commons. I visited a number of the dining halls of the various colleges. They are very handsome and are fitted up very much like the dining rooms of the various inns of court in London. The walls are all in dark woods, with portraits and the coats of arms of the various colleges and patrons ornamenting them. The ceilings are in dark wood. The tables for the students run lengthwise with the room. At the end of the room and at right angles with the students' tables upon a platform raised a foot and a half above the floor, is the table for the dons of that particular college. This is similar to the relative placing of the tables of the barristers and the benchers in the inns of court dining-rooms. A blazing open fire lights up cheerfully this rich and handsome framework of dark wood and ancient ornaments. The dons put on full dress for their dinner, and the students wear their mortar-board caps and black gowns. These gowns and caps have to be worn by the students whenever they enter any of the buildings of any of the colleges. Often a student walking in the street will take off his loose gown and carry it over his arm, but the moment he enters any of the college buildings he must put it on, or he would be refused admission.



DINING IN THE COMMONS.

The morning after the dinner I took breakfast with a party of students in Mr. Van Rensselaer's rooms. The party was made up of chaffing students who talked freely and irreverently upon every subject that came up. This breakfast gave me a hurried glimpse of the interior life of the student at Oxford. The social life here is one of the strongest of its characteristic features. Students meet at breakfast in their rooms and make up jolly parties seeking amusement and possibly at times a comparison of notes concerning their studies. But you do not get the impression from many of the students that there is anyone wearing himself out with study. Here I also learned the meaning of the expression "sporting the oak." Here is a little hall attached to each student's suit of rooms. The outer door of this hall is of heavy oak, and when it is closed it is a signal to all who come that the student is engaged and does not wish to be disturbed.

The country around Oxford is beautiful. The town itself is quaint and most picturesque. The life here is one that would charm either a student or a young man fond of society and athletics. The river is constantly thronged by college oarsmen. When the racing season is on, I am told, one of the most exciting events of each day is the struggle to gain the position known as "the top of the river." As it was explained to me, the top of the river means this: Several boat crews—sometimes to the number of fifteen or twenty—will be placed in line, one slightly ahead of the other, upon the river. At a signal they start off racing for a certain point. The object of each boat's crew in the rear is to run down the boat ahead of them. This is called bumping. If they can bump the nose of their boat against the one just ahead of them, that entitles the bumping boat to go up above the boat that has been bumped. And the boat bumped falls back one in the line. The boat that obtains the position of the top of the river is the one which is able to distance all competitors and to draw away from them in this most exciting of struggles. Very often the boat crew bumped is turned clear over and has to pick its way out as best it can. But this only appears to add fun and hilarity to the race.

Until very recently none of the Dons were permitted to marry. Now a certain number of them can marry. They tell a pathetic story concerning one of the Dons who has been engaged to be married for several years, but he cannot be married until the present number of married Dons is diminished by one or one becomes a widower. One can imagine the thoughts of his forlorn Don and his patient sweetheart as they wait in the quiet atmosphere of Oxford for some one of the Dons of that particular college to give way for their long expected happiness. There is quite a community at Oxford of middle aged men and venerable students, who live here and who retain their membership in the college on account of the advantages of the Bodleian library. For when you have once been graduated from any one of these colleges you can, by paying a small fee every year, retain your membership in that college all your life. A number of noted writers and students make their homes here and are often seen in cap and gown hard at work in some one of the beautiful rooms of this most richly endowed and equipped library. Here it would seem that a student could accomplish the very greatest possible amount of work. The village is quiet, peaceful and beautiful. Life here is very pleasant, the society is agreeable and London is only an hour and a quarter away.

The Rapid Spread of Grangerism.

The next two years were years of astounding growth—a growth almost unparalleled in the history of secret organizations, and resembling that of the Know-Nothings twenty years before. At the end of 1872 about 1,300 Granges had been organized. In the year 1873, 8,668 more were added; and in 1874, 11,941, making a total of almost 22,000, with an average membership of forty. Some idea of the magnitude of these figures may be gained from the fact that the whole number of lodges of Masons and Odd Fellows in the world is estimated at about 20,000. The order was represented in every state except Rhode Island (which has never found room for it). It had been established in the Indian Territory, whence it appealed for help to the National Grange because the governor of the Chickasaw nation looked upon it with suspicion, and had ordered all Grangers out of the Chickasaw country. It had taken root in Canada, where a few years later, there were 800 subordinate Granges. One deputy introduced it into England; others were laboring in France and Germany; and inquiries and invitations were coming even from Australia and Tasmania.

Grange treasuries were overflowing. In 1873 and 1874 the dues to the National Grange alone, according to the official statement, amounted to $348,532 20. The press was discussing the new order with alarm. Legislative committees were scurrying about the country to see what could be done for the farmer. In the words of the New York Nation "the farmer was the spoiled child of our politics." The House of Representatives at Washington was overawed at the new power that was apparently rising in politics, and those who claimed, for the most part falsely, to represent the movement enjoyed an astonishing influence. Among other legislation secured by these men, one bill was rushed through for printing and distributing to the farmers certain agricultural documents, at an expense of $50,000! W. W. Phelps opposed it, only to be bitterly attacked on the score of sympathy with monopolists and lack of sympathy with farmers. One fervid orator from Kansas went over his whole record for proofs of this, and alleged many damaging facts among them that he was rich, that he was interested in banks and railroads, and that he had been graduated with honor from Yale College.—[From "The Rise of the Granger Movement," by Charles W. Pierson, in Popular Science Monthly.

"The Tune the Cow Died of."

How many have used this expression without any definite idea of its meaning and origin. It seems to have come to us from over the sea. In Scotland and the north of Ireland the saying is very common in the mouths of the peasantry. It arose out of an old song:

There was an old man and he had an old cow,
And he had nothing to give her;
So he took out his fiddle and played her a tune
"Consider, good cow, consider;
This is no time of year for the grass to grow:
Consider, good cow, consider."

The old cow died of hunger, and when any grotesquely melancholy song or tune is uttered the north country people say, "That is the tune the old cow died of."